WRITERS OF THE EIGHTIES, BY VAN WYCK BROOKS

The Saturday Review of Literature

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"THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER"
By Carson McCullers
Reviewed by Ben Ray Redman

"THE PEOPLE TALK"
By Benjamin Appel
Reviewed by Louis Adamic

"HEALTH IS WEALTH"
By Paul de Kruif
Reviewed by Mabel S. Ulrich

"THE FAT YEARS AND THE LEAN"
By Bruce Minton and John Stuart
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RADIO AND READING
By Alberta Curtis

"LAST POEMS"
By W. B. Yeats
Reviewed by W. H. Auden

THE REVOLT AGAINST MARX
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"FORTY YEARS A COUNTRY PREACHER"
By George B. Gilbert
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BENJAMIN APPEL "has written with his heart and his eyes and his ears" . . . *(See page 5)*

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Writers of the Eighties

A PREVIEW FROM "NEW ENGLAND: INDIAN SUMMER"

VAN WYCK BROOKS

MARION CRAWFORD wrote his first romances in New England at the turn of the eighties. A nephew of Julia Ward Howe, he had been born in Italy, the son of Thomas Crawford, Thorwaldsen's pupil, the New York sculptor of the fifties whose circle Hawthorne pictured in "The Marble Faun." He had lived as a child in this circle in Rome, where many of his later stories had their setting; and every day he had walked past Constantine's basilica, the Capitol, the Forum, the Coliseum, with the pageant of Roman history spread out before him. Towards the end of his life, he returned to this theme in his "Ave Roma Immortalis." He had been sent to America to school and had studied at three universities, in England, in Germany, at Rome, where he took up Sanskrit; and at twenty-five he had gone to India and stayed there for two years, as editor of the *Indian Herald* at Allahabad. He had joined the Catholic church in India, and, tiger-hunting there and playing polo, he had studied the Zend-Avesta with a Parsee priest and developed his gift as a linguist. He kept his diary in Urdu, and in time he spoke sixteen languages, five or six of which he knew already. At a loose end, in his late twenties, he had returned to America, not knowing what to do but with burning ambitions. He thought of entering politics, he longed to be an opera-singer, he saw himself already as a conquering hero. Handsome, arrogant, clever and young, the centre of an adoring circle of aunts and cousins, he seemed to be universally informed and gifted. He drew, he modelled, he studied singing with George Henschel, who led the new orchestra in Boston; and he was already a journalist with an excellent training. So he began to write for the press, on any and every subject, from Buddhism to politics and railroads.

He was living in Boston, at Mrs. Howe's on Beacon Street, when he was not in New York to be near his uncle, the well-known "king of the lobby," Samuel Ward; but he wrote his first novel at Newport, in Mrs. Howe's "green parlour," the rustic,

Van Wyck Brooks, author of "The Flowering of New England," whose new work, "New England Indian Summer," of which the accompanying article is a preview, will be published by E. P. Dutton.

open-air study under the Norway firs where his aunt communed so often with Spinoza and Hegel. He had made an instant impression as a story-teller. When he had first appeared in Boston, Longfellow and Holmes were enthralled by his tales and anecdotes of Indian life. One of these tales was about a Persian diamond-merchant, a sort of Sir Basil Zaharoff whose name was Jacobs and whom Crawford had known in India, in the mountains, at Simla. This Jacobs had told him the story of his life, an Arabian Night's entertainment in modern conditions, and Crawford wrote the story out and called it "Mr. Isaacs" and found himself instantly famous. Gladstone spoke of the tale as a "literary marvel," and the name of Marion Crawford went round the world. He had anticipated Kipling with his bold pictures of Indian life, and his burst of fame was much like Kipling's later. Still at his aunt's house, in the study facing Beacon Street, he wrote "Dr. Claudius" and "A Roman Singer." The story of "Dr. Claudius," a Swedish professor at Heidelberg, who inherits an American fortune and comes to Newport, suggested the philosophical discussions in which Mrs. Howe rejoiced at Lawton's Valley; while "A Roman Singer" was the fruit of Crawford's defeated ambition to conquer the world as an opera-singer himself. For all these first romances were largely transcribed from his own experience. "An American Politician," a Boston novel, reflecting his political ambitions, pictured the drawing-room of Mrs. Jack Gardner, where Crawford spent much of his time, and the conversations there on finance and Dante. "The Three Fates," again, was a good description of his struggles as a writer in New York, when, toiling away at articles, in a little hall-bedroom, he suddenly struck the vein that made him famous. The hero of this novel inherited a fortune also; and Crawford's own struggling-time was brief. Three years after his first appearance in Boston, he went abroad again in a blaze of success. This was in 1884, when Crawford was thirty. He spent a winter at Constantinople, where he was presently married, in a cloud of ambassadors, admirals, generals and princes. Then he settled at Sorrento, where he lived for the rest of his life, in the villa that overlooked the Isles of the Sirens.

Thus opened the career of the deft, ingenious story-teller who was known for twenty-five years as the Prince of Sorrento. For he lived there in princely style. He liked an atmosphere of grandeur, with trains of servants and sailors in Sorrentine dress, with gay masquerades and parties on the loggia and a cosmopolitan troop of friends and guests. One of his romances, "With the Immortals," suggested the conversation at his dinner-parties, which ranged over literature, politics, and art from the days of Pliny and Horace to those of King Humbert. The Englishman in the story had bought a villa like his own, a half-ruined castle on the cliffs, and he invented an electrical device that produced an immense eruption under

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the sea. This suddenly caused the reappearance of seven or eight immortals, Caesar, Leonardo, Pascal, Heine, Chopin, and two or three others, who emerged from the mist after the storm and wandered about the grounds and joined in the conversation at the castle. For seclusion, Crawford leased a tower on the Calabrian coast, San Niccola, a stronghold built as a refuge in the Saracen times, on a cliff that overhung a little bay, with a dungeon lashed by the waves in stormy weather; and there he wrote many of his novels. In his lateen-rigged felucca, with four sailors, he explored the Mediterranean, sailing from island to island and along the coast, sometimes with the youthful Norman Douglas, who obtained the idea of his first novel from a priest on the island of Elba during one of these cruises. Later, in a larger yacht, he crossed the Atlantic. This was in the days when he went to America every year for lecturing tours and winters in New York, where he turned out hasty novels that no one mentioned seriously.

In fact, between this later work and the novels he wrote in the eighties there was little difference in quality, in type, or in style. He was an improvisator, a story-teller, natural, nonchalant, easy, and the art of the novel was always the last of his cares. Personally brilliant, he was anything but a brilliant writer, and problems of technique and social problems, which occupied the minds of James and Howells, were far from his intellectually simpler world. His fresh, brisk style was in no way distinguished, and his characterizations were general and somewhat blurred. His people were puppets in what he called a "pocket theatre," and one scarcely recalled their traits when the curtain fell. But his narrative gift was astonishing, and his interest in life was eager and inexhaustible, wide and observant. In his historical novels, about ancient Arabia and Persia, the Crusades or the Spain of Philip II, in his novels of modern life in many countries, Germany, Turkey, Bohemia, America, England, in the Saracinesca series, most of all, describing the Roman nobility in the decades after 1860—the social world he had known from his earliest boyhood—he seemed to possess in every case the special and accurate knowledge that created a perfect illusion of the *mise en scène*. He could tell you how life on the Bosphorus differed from life in Pera. He knew every street and shop in Constantinople. He could tell you about glass-blowing in the glass-works at Murano and how cigarettes are made in a factory at Munich, how silversmiths conduct their trade and how the Baden tailors are able to make their clothes at a moment's notice. He could take you on a duke's yacht at Newport, or as readily introduce you behind the scenes at an embassy in Petersburgh or Paris, a cardinal's apartment in Rome or a rectory in England; or it might be the court of Darius, a tiger-hunt in India, a German professor's household, an Italian castle. He could take you through a duel in all its phases. He knew the cry of the trumpeter swans when they pass overhead in the early morning in Iceland; he knew how a Cossack feels on a bench in exile, and he had at his tongue's end the proverbs and untranslatable phrases of Italians, Russians, Czechs, Arabs and Spaniards. Add to this versatility, which was truly astounding, his lucidity, his energy, his dash, and the zest and the masculine charm that informed his writing, and one understood the vogue of Marion Crawford, with his tone of a clever, accomplished man of the world. He was the perfect romancer of the Tauchnitz series, born to be read on trains and in Swiss hotels, as one contemplated raids on Munich or Venice, on Prague, Rome, Heidelberg, Naples, Constantinople. Wherever one proposed to go, Marion Crawford had been there first and had written a charming story on the scenes in question, a story that gave a third dimension to Baedeker's dry notations and enabled one's fancy to share in the life of the people.

WITH Marion Crawford and "H. H.," following Howells and James, interest in fiction steadily grew in the eighties. Meanwhile, the interest in poetry lapsed, perhaps because, as Godkin said, the spread of science "killed the imagination." The poets seemed to be disappearing, as the wild flowers had disappeared, in the regions where the poets had thriven of old. The arethusa, the gentian, the cardinal-flower that had bloomed near Agassiz's museum, the rhodora that lurked in West Cambridge, the Watertown yellow violets, and the ginseng of Brookline had retired before civilization. They had not even waited for the coming of the suburban streets; they seemed to feel the danger miles away. They had followed the Indians into oblivion, and the poets were following the flowers; for no new poets of equal scope had appeared in the train of the older poets, who were gradually falling silent, one by one. It was true that Emily Dickinson, in her hermitage at Amherst, excelled in her special intensity all but the greatest; but Miss Dickinson throve in conditions that throttled the

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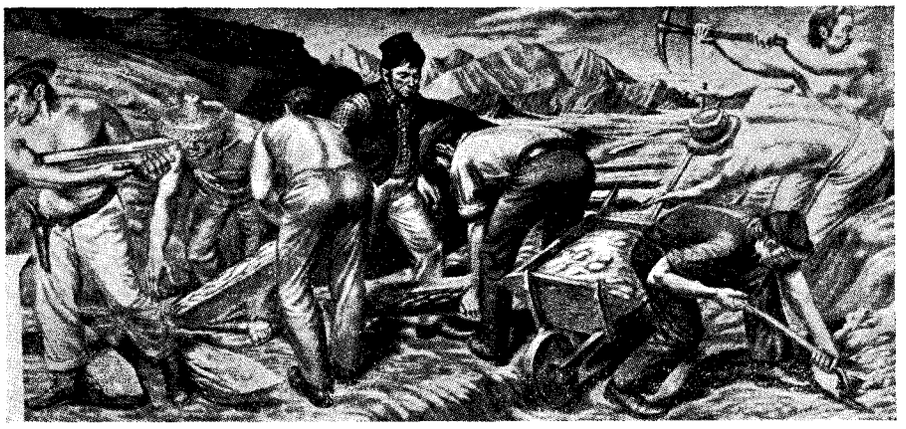
American Humanity on Parade

THE PEOPLE TALK. By Benjamin Appel. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 502 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by LOUIS ADAMIC



From the mural, "Role of the Immigrant in the Industrial Development of America," by Edward Laning.

ONE day early in 1939, in New York City, Ben Appel started asking questions of the people he met: simple human questions about the common everyday facts and things of their lives. How do you like your job? How much do you make? What kind of hours you got? Have you always lived here? How you makin' out?

He left New York, drove through New England, then across the broad span of states to Michigan, still talking and listening to the people, textile workers, bankers, butchers, the unemployed, cops, housewives, business men, automobile workers; the native-born and the immigrants and their children; the rich and the poor; to people who could talk your ear off and to the inarticulate—the big human parade that stirs across the geographical vastness of America.

Wisconsin, Minnesota: Appel still moving West, asking and listening all the way, all the time, and recording. Oregon, California, the Middle Continent; then the great swing south through Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, and on to Washington, D. C., where the representatives of all these people meet and make laws for them.

Ben Appel has written with his heart and his eyes and his ears, and rarely has the idea of *movement,* which somehow describes the intricate immensity of America, been so vividly presented. Here is the movement of forces, notions, people, clashes and encounters, now moving forward purposefully, then just as apt to turn erratic, but always holding, it seems, some hint of promise; movement which in time is almost bound to get somewhere. Appel himself, moving across the continent "trying to get at the thing," is subtly symbolical of the unrest that has stimulated a people. Here is an enormous human variety linked together, if by nothing else, by the bright thread of freedom that runs through stirrings and doings of men and women, groups, and regions.

All, of course, is not milk and honey in the land of the Americans. The people talked and Ben Appel listened and often heard the poignant cry that breaks through matter-of-fact words, and sometimes raises itself in mounting protest. "A man has a right to his own home." They talked of conditions, told him about the good things and the bad. . . . "Good crop last year. . . ." "Gov'ment oughta keep its hands off business." "You think we'll have a war?" Always talk about war. And about the encroachment of the Machine. "Something made by hand is fine. It's a different life, see? Machines take jobs away."

One of the most admirable attributes of the book is Appel's calm acceptance of the diversity of the peoples that have gone into the making of this country. The Pole, Greek, and Croatian move as naturally across the scene as the Yankee and Indian. There is no editorializing; the people speak for themselves. They are not paper characters shaped to expound a theme, but living people trying to understand and solve their problems.

Here and there "The People Talk" has some of the qualities of good poetry. The richness and spirit are there. The people live and work and talk, and their words are more than words. Here are the faces, the voices, the hearts, the guts behind the statistics of the Gallup polls.

Louis Adamic will be the editor of a new magazine, Common Ground, *which will explore the racial-cultural situation in the United States.*

Sidelights on the Southwest

FIGURES IN A LANDSCAPE. By Paul Horgan. New York: Harper & Bros. 1940. 284 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by HARRY THORNTON MOORE

NEW MEXICO has a color and a flavor distinctly its own, as Italy has. And while Paul Horgan can describe the complexion of New Mexico superbly, he is also aware of the deeper importance of his settings.

"Figures in a Landscape" presents a group of stories about life in New Mexico (with a touch of Missouri and Texas) during the last century and a half; there are interstitial essays about the social history of the place. Most of the people in the stories are in one way or another aware of the previously-mentioned influence of the landscape, though not so crudely as characters in fiction are usually aware of such things. "In Summer's Name" is one exception: but although the people feel no magic in the setting, this story of a Texas town provides one of the most interesting sections of the book not only because it demonstrates the tie between revival meetings and sexual outbursts (which combine to substitute for landscape-influence), but also because it and one of its prefatory essays deal with the spell the movies cast over the American populace. The essay, "Fun with a Mirror," describes a new phase of American fatuousness, one which apparently has its origins in the Southwest—the imitations of Hollywood premieres, with local "stars" made up as movie idols arriving in blazes of light and glory at small-town theaters where cheering crowds wait.

Several of the stories are merely quiet anecdotes, content to reveal some dorsal flick of character; others, such as that about the revival meetings, have an awkward letdown after suspense; some, like "The Candy Colonel," are excursions into sentimentality, and most of the essays—despite the value of their sharp observations—are too formally written to fit smoothly between the stories. The excellent of narration and description in the fictional pieces is sometimes improved, sometimes marred, by the author's mannerism of one-sentence paragraphs. But in the main Paul Horgan has given us a fine and full picture of that fascinating mélange of cultures which makes up New Mexico.

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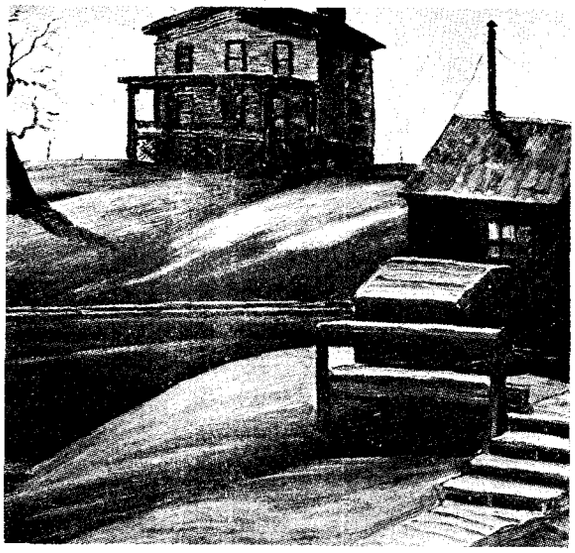

From the painting, "Southern Mansion," by Norman MacLeish.

Of Human Loneliness

THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER. By Carson McCullers. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1940. 356 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

ONE cannot help remarking that this is an extraordinary novel to have been written by a young woman of twenty-two; but the more important fact is that it is an extraordinary novel in its own right, considerations of authorship apart.

With firm mastery of her medium the author exposes and evaluates an unusual complex of human relationships, and makes that complex understandable and affecting. Her very first sentence arrests us: "In the town there were two mutes, and they were always together." Her opening paragraphs convince us that we have to deal with someone who knows how to write.

And the following novel richly satisfies the expectations that it successively provokes. Yet, while giving satisfaction, it does not end by putting a full-stop to thought and feeling, but leaves the reader busily pondering the author's intentions and meanings after the author's words have ceased. Fiction that so satisfies and so leaves us is not negligible.

Writing of a small group of people in a Southern town of some thirty thousand inhabitants, writing with sharp and sometimes brutal realism, Miss McCullers unfolds a tale of universal significance that has almost mystical overtones. Her theme is the theme of Arnold's poem "To Marguerite"—human loneliness. Each of us is "in the sea of life enisl'd," but we can never accept our condition: we are forever seeking to reach out to one another across "the shoreless watery wild," seeking, by mutual contact, to defeat "The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea." Each of us longs to love, to cling to, to gather strength from another human being; longs for another who will understand. Like the characters of this novel—like Mick Kelly, the adolescent girl full of dreams and music; Dr. Copeland, the frustrated, embittered Negro who would battle for his race; Jake Blount, obsessed by social and economic injustice; Biff Brannon, watchful, questioning, eager for answers—we are all seekers and hunters. And sometimes we think that we have won to our goal.

Mick and the Doctor and Jake and Biff thought, each in his own way and according to his needs, that they had found understanding in John Singer, the deaf-mute whose polite and sympathetic smile answered all who spoke to him. Locked in silence, Singer radiated a kind of peace that seemed the outward sign of inner wisdom. He was always ready to listen endlessly; always able, apparently, to comprehend. With no way of discovering what manner of man Singer really was, each of the four saw Singer as he would have him be. Each, individually and alone, came to him for understanding, inspiration, and strength; and none left unrewarded, save on the one occasion when, by chance, they came together. What they did not know was that John Singer was as dependent as themselves, that he in turn relied upon the understanding of another mute, the Greek, Spiros Antonapoulos; and that Singer's tower of strength was as much the fictitious creation of lonely imagination as their own. Nor, in their ignorance, could they foresee the disastrous results of Singer's being left to stand without support.

With subtlety and power, with suggestions and forthright statements, by means of well realized characters and revealing episodes, Miss McCullers circles her theme, coming closer and closer to its core, until she has encompassed and exposed its meaning. The task she set herself called for more than mere narrative skill, more than effective dramatic technique, and she has met its requirements with remarkable success. But narrative skill and dramatic episodes speed the reader on his way, while sudden, surprising insights illumine it. The author is never commonplace: used props, stock characters, and worn literary counters have no place in her writing. (For example, we have met Negro fathers and daughters in fiction before, but never a father and daughter like Dr. Copeland and Portia, at once united and alienated in a relationship singular and touching.) The originality of "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter" leaps to the eye. Its other, more substantial merits remain lodged in the reader's memory.

Ben Ray Redman is a critic and novelist now living in California. He conducted, for years, "Old Wine in New Bottles" in the Herald Tribune Books.

Florida Scrub Folk

WHEN THE WHIPPOORWILL. By Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1940. 275 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

IN ten stories of her own belated Florida frontier and one tender interlude with a grave boy in the Carolina mountains Mrs. Rawlings continues and sustains her warm and understanding treatment of hell-raising folks and rabbity shy ones, all of whom, except such cold trash as Trax Colton, make good laughter or show a half-secret tenderness more precious for the hiding. Though often in a poverty as hard as Florry Leddy and her man Martin found, and a loneness as complete and at last as bitter as Mattie Syles knew, they occupy a good world with standards which are sound as well as quaint.

There is sentiment to overflowing in Mrs. Rawlings's stories of rip-snorting old men and scolding women, of varmints, and of boy and gal young uns hungry in loneliness. Some of them come perilously close to sentimentality. But her stories are by no means all new cane syrup and Florida sunshine. There is meanness and injustice, and practically everything our welfare workers and welfare writers would associate with underprivilege. Her concern, however, is not with the economic and social order but with the human heart. She gives her characters dignity in bootlegging and integrity in the midst of undoubted malnutrition.

The literary race of her people is both familiar and long known. The Florida scrub folk are the same company that filled so many books about the Appalachian people, sharing a similar patterned poverty in a similar isolation. But Mrs. Rawlings has not only moved from the mountains to Florida in developing a locale peopled by persisting frontiersmen, she has also added a skill and a wisdom to the tales about them. These stories are fit company for her novels about the same people.

Jonathan Daniels is the author of "A Southerner Discovers New England."

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Paul de Kruif's War

HEALTH IS WEALTH. By Paul de Kruif. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1940. 246 *pp., with index,* $2.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH

FOR five years Paul de Kruif and a little band of medical and health men have led a war for a federally-supported program designed to make available to every person in the country the full benefit of the newest medical science. The drive into Washington has not yet met success. But it has been carried to the common people, and today thousands of these are ready to demand action of their Washington representatives. In this war de Kruif is certainly its greatest reporter. He is a hundred times more persuasive than most health propagandists because for him the saving of human life is not only common sense, but it is a religion as well. He believes in figures as wholeheartedly as a public accountant. He will prove to you in a twinkling Dr. Max Peet's contention that "it costs much less to save 'em than to bury 'em." But his ardor for the cause somehow imbues his figures with such color and intensity that the coldest statistics become an army of struggling human beings.

In this book he tells of the fight, of the encouragements and set-backs, and of the stirring men who coöperated with him. There was much that was disheartening in this five-year struggle, but there is nothing disheartening in de Kruif's account of it. His reports of the rise and fall of hopes, of the conferences in Washington, the bucking up of courage in the Detroit gatherings, all have the contagious excitement familiar to everyone who has surrendered to a cause. He calls people by name and in a word or two sketches the personality behind the name. It is all lively reading. And in reading the average person will learn a great deal about health conditions, about health men, and about how hard it is to get money out of Washington, with all the spending. He tells the story of the rift between the New Deal and the doctors over the program submitted by Miss Roche, a program in which neither the U. S. Public Health Service nor the medical profession had been consulted; of localized health experiments that have already indicated what might happen in a nation-wide campaign. He is perhaps the warmest friend the "men against death" can boast, but both ultra radicals and ultra conservatives in the fold exasperate him to a degree.

The climax of the book is the program itself. It is far broader in scope and more intelligently thought out than the controversial Wagner bill. Here are its main points: that it should be administered, not by a new agency but by the U. S. Public Health Service, and in the states by physicians and health men already established; that the federal government should contribute technical and financial aid to the states not only for individual medical care, but for the building and maintenance of hospitals and health centers wherever needed, and for the equipping and maintaining of free beds in existing hospitals; that provision be provided for periodic study courses for all doctors. Space does not permit discussion here, but it is obvious that all of this will cost a lot of money. But de Kruif maintains, and convincingly, that if the program be financed as a long-range, self-liquidating project, it will prove to be a sound investment, not merely in happiness and well-being, but in actual dollars. He even suggests a new sort of national bookkeeping as a check. It all sounds so sensible that it is hard to see why it hasn't been done long ago, and harder still to understand why Harry Hopkins and the other big-wigs in Washington refused to see that "human erosion is a major cause of poverty and destitution."

All in all this is a book of arresting facts marshalled in militant words. That it can still have a pull in these days when human life seems at its cheapest, is proof of its sincerity and vitality.

Mabel S. Ulrich is a physician who has given much time to public health service.

"Paul de Kruif is perhaps the warmest friend the 'men against death' can boast."

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

10 IMAGINARY PLACES

Books are the only passports which permit you to travel to the places briefly described below, for they are, unfortunately, entirely imaginary. How many of them have you visited? Allow 5 points for each place you can name correctly, and another 5 if you can recall the book and its author. A score of 70 is par, 80 is good, 90 or better is excellent. Answers on page 13.

1. The princess of this mythical Balkan kingdom married an American whom she met while visiting the United States incognito.
2. Helped by a remarkable climate and a placid philosophy, the inhabitants of this isolated place lived to be very old.
3. The dictator of this South American republic skipped out with the treasury receipts and a young American opera singer.
4. When the king of this little monarchy was unavoidably absent, an English traveler was induced to impersonate him and go through the coronation ceremony.
5. The two political factions in this tiny monarchy were the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians.
6. Children in this country played with quoits made of gold, rubies, and emeralds.
7. In this huge hall, which had 540 gates, a banquet was served every night to a group of distinguished military men.
8. Chief geographical feature of this country was a river which meandered for five miles through wood and dale and then sank into an underground cavern.
9. "All hope abandon, ye who enter here."
10. Because the really worthy citizens of this republic were honored by being granted extra voting power, life was perfect to the point of boredom.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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BYZANTIUM

WHEN MEN are troubled they must seek relief. And the writer has sought it by attempting the unfamiliar exercise of thought, if he may so compliment rather inconspicuous mental processes.

We are looking right into the eyes of great and perhaps immediate peril which may overwhelm us, though, with courage, intelligence, organization, luck, and the happy accident of oceans, which, in spite of the aeroplane we invented, are still a factor, we may beat off overt attack from without. If we do, regardless of what may happen abroad, certain things are inevitable. In the first place our system of thought and life, however modified by new necessities, will have earned a species of continuity. Accordingly we shall at once become the refuge and the storehouse of the sciences and the arts. Our system of thought and life is favorable to them in contrast to systems standardized by power from above. Thomas Mann cannot thrive in Germany nor Fermi in Italy. They can and do here. And if we make our footing good in a world of avalanches, we shall have some right to expect noble development not unaccompanied by its own special danger.

For what we are faced with has happened before. Almost 1,500 years ago another great and powerful nation, in composition as heterogeneous as our own, though like us it spoke one language, found itself isolated in a world of furious wars and barbaric dictators. Outside the frontiers civilization and culture died in agony in a couple of generations. The external economic system sustained shocks so savage that men fell back into the bronze age, and it was eight or nine centuries before symptoms of recovery were to be observed. All through that time the isolated nation fought off barbarians, whether to the East or to the West, with varying success, but always with superb courage and ingenuity, maintaining at the same time some appearance of civilization and the entire reality of books. It was the only country in Europe for hundreds of years where laymen were frequently literate and took pleasure in being so. There is perhaps no spectacle in history more suggestive for us than the millenial protection which the Byzantines provided for the ancient arts and sciences at a time when Charlemagne could not read and when two centuries later a king of England could be nicknamed Beauclerc, because he could write his name.

We are confronted by a not dissimilar condition, which unhappily is not a theory, and are called upon, whatever happens, to perform the function which the Byzantines performed. In the first place we shall almost certainly be compelled to defend our lives and liberty. Because of our own folly during the last twenty years, we shall have few and weak allies, however willing some of them may be. But we have tremendous resources and the strongest strategic situation of any great nation, though it is to be wished it were ten times stronger. And hence we shall probably be in a position, like the Byzantines, to cherish and preserve what gains men have made since the Renaissance. But it will not do for us to become, as we easily may, men of fixed and stereotyped minds.

Danger stereotypes and sets the mind, and this stereotyping and setting becomes a new and deadlier danger. We face material peril as the Byzantines did at all times, and we also must reckon with spiritual peril, of which they were unaware and which in the end was their destruction, though they never lost courage. It remains to be seen whether we shall develop under stress, making a more satisfactory individual and state as we go or become stiff, static men moving like mechanisms in a hieratic bureaucracy. The second alternative describes pretty well what happened to the Byzantines, and though it took a long time for relays of Turks assisted by Western Europe to capture Constantinople, things move more swiftly nowadays. If in the isolation, apparently desired by so many of our people who now have their desire, we can preserve independence of mind in such a way as to make it advantageous to the state, we shall have done a braver thing for man than the salvation of culture, greater far than Byzantium's noble service; and the word American will be in no danger, as it seems to be at the moment, of conveying an implication not entirely unlike the implication of the word Byzantine.

Leonard Bacon.

Marsh Cat

Audrey Wurdemann

THEY do not know state lines, nor a man's fences;
Boundaries mean nothing to them in the dark;
Their moon eyes glower where the barricade commences;
They acknowledge no Noah; they repudiate the Ark.

They are the people who will not get their feet wet;
They snatch the marsh heron's eggs; they molest the plover
Cleverly and quietly; they avoid the neat net
Dangled for the crayfish, yet steal him out of cover.

And are we not useless, who have no such protection,
Slitted eyes in the dark, and sleek fur,
Easy feet, padded feet, each a clawed perfection
Of final talons stabbing the vital barrier?

We are tall and naked; born into the world
Puling and unlovely; the marsh cat moves
Like a spotted bullet upon his prey hurled,
Like a flung plummet the mathematician proves.

We are conceited; well the marsh cat knows
That he must die unless he seizes food;
We wander with romance; we pull a mallow rose;
He stalks a seagull; he finds salt flesh good.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Uncle Sam Has a Book"

SIR:—I commend Burton Rascoe on some very interesting reporting. ["Uncle Sam Has A Book," May 30.] His expose of the blind, thoughtless, half-hysterical action of the defenders of the esthetic faith—among which are found many scholars, near-scholars, and notables—is a justly needed prick to the "king-can-do-no-wrong" bubble that we helped inflate.

However, the last thought Mr. Rascoe gives me, is, in the vernacular, a stinker. It roughly, is as follows: International "con" man and agent provocateur Vollbehr, straight from Berlin, pulls fast one on United States. With ill-gotten money he busies himself with whatever an agent provocateur does, making the American people subject to Teutonic ingenuity; or Our Nell-Doubly Bilked.

Why is such dangerous material released in significant times such as these when the facts were known in December 16, 1934? I have no mission. All I want to know is: Is this the "hate trend" in literature that our (post-) war-enlightened elders warned us against?

ROBERTS BROCK JACKSON.
Antioch College.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Reporter Rascoe informs us that the facts in his article were not well known in December, 1934; that they were interred in records, and that he came upon the scent of the story just three months ago.*

SIR:—I think that Burton Rascoe's piece, "Uncle Sam Has a Book," is the most exciting contribution that has ever been made to *The Saturday Review of Literature*. Congratulations on a swell job.

BENNETT A. CERF.
New York City.

"The Bloody Mohawk"

SIR:—I wish to offer strong protest against a statement made by Mr. Allan Nevins in his review of T. Wood Clarke's "The Bloody Mohawk." Mr. Nevins says that the author of the book in question is "notably just to the Tories under Butler, and like other recent writers, makes it clear that they fought fairly, and that the worst 'atrocities' imputed to them were *inventions*." As a student for very many years of the early history of the Mohawk valley, I consider this a shocking statement. The archives of the State of New York are packed with unimpeachable testimony to the atrocities of frightfulness committed by the British and Iroquois under Walter Butler and Sir John Johnson during almost the entire course of the Revolution. These atrocities were so utterly horrible as to almost transcend belief.

WILLIAM W. KLINE.
Philadelphia, Pa.

"But in my humble estimation, a thing of beauty is a thing of beauty, and a joy forever is a joy forever."

Reading Goes On

SIR:—Readers of the *Saturday Review of Literature* may be interested to learn some of the details of two programs affecting the dissemination in Europe of information on American life, letters, and ideas, as portrayed in our books and periodicals.

A year ago the Rockefeller Foundation gave the American Library Association a grant of $60,000 to provide European readers with freer access to the thought of American men of letters and science. The grant, which covers a three-year period, is being administered by the Association's Committee on International Relations. In spite of the very considerable difficulties occasioned by present conditions in Europe, over $6,000 worth of books and periodicals have been sent since October, 1939, to libraries in Denmark, Eire, England, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. Once again books and magazines are being sent out to hospitals and troop centers. Some seven hundred books have been sent to the American Library in Paris, and a total of one hundred and forty-one annual subscriptions for periodicals have been placed for the Library by the A.L.A. Books for Europe project, mentioned above. In the past two decades the Library has done a splendid piece of work in promoting, not merely in France and its capital, but throughout most of Europe, a knowledge and appreciation of American life, history, culture and ideals. It has served writers, students, professors, journalists, diplomats, travelers, and the "general public."

This leads to the second "program" mentioned in the first paragraph. With the assistance of many American librarians and others, groups of sponsors for chapters of the American Library in Paris are being formed in thirty-odd large cities of the United States. These sponsor groups will vouch for and back a general plan to raise the $25,000 necessary to keep the Library operating for the next three years, and, it is hoped, an additional $25,000 for emergency reserve. This effort, directed from the United States Chapters Center (in quarters generously provided by the New York Public Library), deserves at least the moral support of everyone interested in books, libraries, and international coöperation.

J. PERIAM DANTON.
Temple University.

Erratum

The photograph accompanying the review of "Mr. Secretary," by Ben Ames Williams, Jr., in the issue of May 25, was not that of the author but Ben Ames Williams. We apologize for the error.

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Rosy Specs, Blue Picture

THE FAT YEARS AND THE LEAN. By Bruce Minton and John Stuart. New York: Modern Age Books. 1940. 464 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by FREDERICK LEWIS ALLEN

THIS book is a curious exhibit. Taking the form of a history of the United States from Great War to Great War (from 1918 to 1939) it is a prolonged and unrelieved Communist tract, so orthodox as to be quite suitable for distribution by Soviet foreign missionary societies.

To begin it, as I did, without reading the foreword and thereby being notified of the intention of the authors "to sift a colossal body of evidence which in our estimation proves that capitalism, as it emerged after 1919, was moribund," is to be bewildered almost at once. On the very first page I confronted a statement that "once the statesmen of England and France staked off their claims [in the Paris Peace Conference], nothing remained for the United States. This country had to be content with having crushed German imperialism." Did the authors, I wondered, imagine that the United States had territorial claims for itself? What sort of history was this? On page 6 I was surprised to learn that "the great corporations had begun to come into their own. At the turn of the century they had produced two-thirds of the country's manufactured goods; by 1919 this share was augmented to 87 per cent of the total." A footnote here cited Berle and Means—and a glance at Berle and Means showed that 87 per cent figure was for *all* corporations, not "great" corporations by any known system of measurement. That odd discrepancy drove me back to the foreword to find out what might be responsible for such carelessness—and also put me on my guard. On the next page appeared an even more astonishing statement—that during the War "the number of millionaires almost quadrupled: twenty-five thousand income-tax returns in 1918 showed incomes over one million dollars apiece." Again I went back to the record, and in the "World Almanac" for 1922 I found Federal figures on the number of individuals who paid income taxes for 1918 on incomes of a million dollars or more. The actual figure was not 25,000 but just 67! Heaven knows the profiteering in the War was scandalous in any case; but can't we, I asked myself, at least be accurate enough about it to avoid multiplying a statistic by 373?

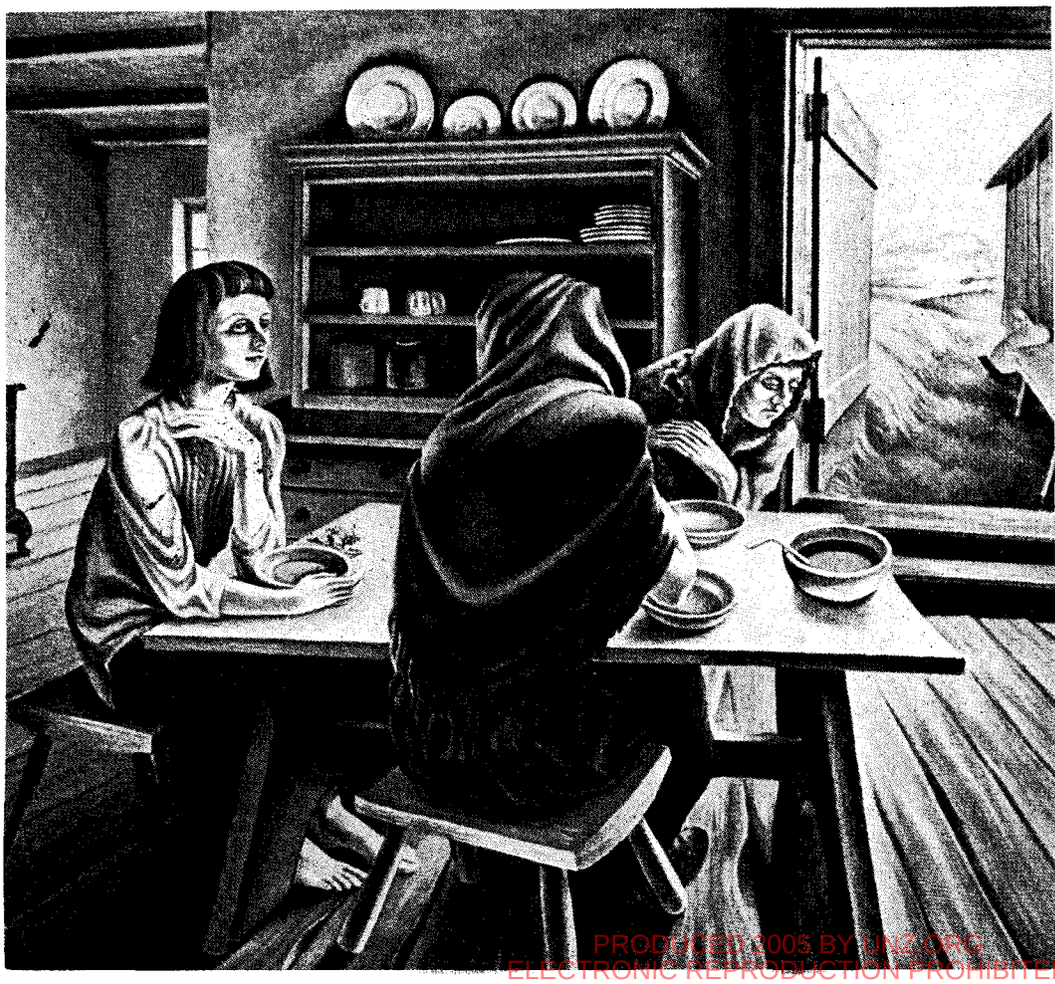
To the best of my knowledge and belief, the ratio of factual inaccuracy in the book drops sharply from that point on, though there are various subsequent statements and figures which might be worth a careful check-up. But the overwhelming bias continues unabated, with all the imprecision that this implies. The word "monopoly" is used to mean any sort of business that the authors dislike, whether competitive or not. "Fascism" is used in the overall sense familiar to readers of recent Communist literature; for instance, the "nub of disagreement" in the Roosevelt-Landon campaign of 1936 "centered in the question of how to preserve [capitalism], whether by forcible dictatorship of monopoly that meant fascism, or by holding on to democratic forms, acknowledging certain abuses, and alleviating them." There is no lack of positiveness in the authors' opinions: writing about the onset of the depression, for example, they assert that "with the exception of a few Marxians, no one in America realized just what had happened." Nor do they shrink from the formidable problems of exegesis presented in recent months to Moscow missionaries. The Soviets, like the Communist Party, being always right, it is easy for them to announce that in the fall of 1939 Finland "began to indulge in a series of provocations directed against the U.S.S.R. At this point, the Soviets took stern measures. With the intention of eliminating a menace to its security and peace, the Soviet Union took up arms against the hostile Finnish government."

There is almost nothing in the book about American education, literature and the arts, religion, science, invention, engineering, or the changing conditions of marriage and family and social life. There is almost no suggestion that the American people ever enjoyed themselves. Not only is the entire story economic and political, as the authors themselves are the first to admit, but since the Marxians were not running things during this twenty-one-year period, almost everything that happened is presented as dismally wrong. One has a certain admiration for men who can stick so unerringly to the note of disapproval (except about the C.P. and Russia) for 429 pages; even in a history of a generally unhappy period, there must have been temptations to cheerfulness now and then.

But the reader should have a right, it seems to me, to ask for at least an attempt at impartial and discriminating judgment of men and events. The chief value of "The Fat Years and the Lean" is as a durable demonstration of the precise tint of the spectacles through which Soviet partisans looked at recent American history in 1939 and 1940.

Frederick Lewis Allen, an editor of Harper's magazine, is the author of "Only Yesterday," and "Since Yesterday," histories of the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties.

From the painting, "Give Us This Day," by John S. De Martelly



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Radio and Reading

DO BROADCASTS COMPETE WITH BOOKS?

ALBERTA CURTIS

THE book world has viewed, somewhat down its nose and sometimes with alarm, the inroads which radio has made upon the leisure-time of the reading public. Radio is said to be a more facile and sociable medium of communication than print, and there is the fear that it will attract people away from reading for information and entertainment.

On the other hand, optimistic broadcasters, librarians, publishers, and booksellers have frequently wondered why radio cannot be used as a powerful tool to stimulate interest in reading. Mention of a title by a commentator, or the dramatization of a past novel have occasionally created great demand for the book throughout the country, *e.g.,* Alexander Woollcott's going "quietly mad" over James Hilton's "Lost Horizon" and Orson Welles's dramatization of H. G. Wells's "War of the Worlds."

The question of what radio actually does to reading has now been made the topic of thorough and objective study by the Princeton Radio Research Project, which was set up in 1937 by the Rockefeller Foundation to study the effects of radio upon American cultural life. The findings will be published shortly in the monograph entitled, "Radio and the Printed Page," but some of the material has been available for examination.

In order to make the topic amenable to research, the question: "Are radio and print allies or enemies?" had to be split up. The questions posed for study were directed mainly toward the positive side of the picture: "Can radio serve to stimulate reading? If so, under what conditions?" The answers are surprising evidence that radio listening does stimulate reading, but they do not at this time give much on the possible, concomitant *decrease* in reading due to radio. With most forces working toward wider spread and consumption of print, it would take as much work again to single out the influence of a single factor working in the opposite direction.

The study began with the collection of miscellaneous experiments in radio promotion of reading, and opinions of exact data as to their effectiveness. These are too numerous and scattered to report here. It is generally agreed, however, that the history of important book programs begins with Alexander Woollcott's "Early Bookworm" series. Employed by a group of leading publishers on time given by the National Broadcasting Company, he was free to criticize as he chose any of the books on their lists. This and subsequent series by such exponents of the literary craft as Clifton Fadiman, Harry Hansen, Harry Salpeter, and others, about 1930 to 1933, proved failures so far as book sales were concerned. The fact that mail response on these programs was of high quality and increasing quantity over the periods they ran did not keep them on the air, when products of greater mass appeal were proving that they could use the time with financial benefit.

This is not to say that the early experiences with book programs on the national networks discouraged all such efforts. The Publishers' Advertising Club of New York polled all stations in the fall of 1937 on a survey of radio book programs, and found that 146 out of the 200 replying did use some book scripts, 92 of them regularly. The issues of *Radio Guide* for all sections of the country were checked for book programs in the week ending March 18, 1939. This yielded a list of 101 different book program titles.

Joseph Henry Jackson is a veteran among the radio commentators on books.

Most of these programs are sustaining (non-commercial), and it is probable that book talk on the air will remain in that portion of the time budget. The book review is by far the most frequent type, with its producers stressing that they give it a more personal, intimate, colloquial touch than the literary columns employ. Other types are the straight reading of books or digests of books, literature "courses," dramatizations or dramatized "teasers," literary quizzes, author talks, panel discussions, spot announcements.

THE effect of radio programs is more observable, and probably greater, away from the relatively well-served East. Evidence of this is furnished by Joseph Henry Jackson's book reviews over a NBC Pacific coast network. This has been on the air for over fifteen years, but did not achieve popularity when tried on a coast-to-coast network, possibly because it was given a less favorable time. However, its action is credited by booksellers in the Far West as having a paramount influence on book buying. In a poll on the influence of various reviewers, Jackson was top man, and his radio series received just twice as many votes as his book column in the *San Francisco Chronicle.*

A report on rural library services prepared for the American Association for Adult Education by Marion Humble, who investigated in the Middle West and Far West, shows that the radio is a potent force there. "To the question, 'Where do you hear about the books you ask for in the library?' farmers' wives, rural teachers, and club women in small towns gave the same reply, 'Radio.'"

An example of a closer check is the following: One Middle Western educational station, WOI of Iowa State College, has attempted to supply an audience which is undernourished in the literary sense. A half hour daily reading of novels, and seven book reviews per week have been carried on for ten years. A Radio Book Club run by the station has circulated, for a

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small rental fee, more than forty thousand books in the same period. When listeners were asked to write in if they had ever purchased books as a result of the programs, 676 replies came in, 360 listing the titles of 535 copies, and the additional number giving less specific answers or simply expressing appreciation of the programs. Almost half of the libraries in Iowa, replied to a questionnaire sent out for an additional checkup. Four-fifths of these, or one-third of the libraries in the state, said that their circulation had been affected by the WOI programs, and slightly more than half of those replying had bought books as a result. It is interesting to note that by far the greatest number of titles listed in the answers of individuals and libraries had been *read* in part rather than reviewed on WOI, an indication that publishers need not fear giving away their stock on the radio any more than they fear it in the *Reader's Digest*.

But impressions and studies of individual book programs do not give the answer to the questions posed at the beginning: Do people read as a consequence of listening to the radio, and if so, what kind of people listening to what kind of programs? It is begging these questions if only book programs are observed, which it must be assumed will appeal mainly to people who are already interested in reading. Using the poll method, the Office of Radio Research interviewed two thousand people on the topic of following up radio listening by reading. The respondents were selected at random, but since the resources available for the study did not permit getting a group as accurately distributed as in a Gallup poll, the results are given separately for the different age, sex, and educational groups when these factors are influential. Only those people were counted as "influenced" who were able to name the program which prompted reading, and the material read. Each was asked, too, whether any additional factors influenced him to read a particular book or article.

Table 1 below shows the programs mentioned by 876 respondents as having induced them to read: they are presented here, classified by *types* of programs, with a few individual programs of outstanding numerical importance given separately.

It is striking that serious talks lead to the greatest amount of follow-up reading, and that book talks are by far the most influential sub-group of this type. Alexander Woollcott's score is given separately, also Orson Welles's, because of their singular importance. The ten percent of follow-up reading given to classical and semi-classical music is surprising also, with operas of paramount importance, while on the remaining symphonic programs the commentators, particularly Deems Taylor, were influential. "Information Please!" accounts for almost all of the reading for quiz programs.

THE figures obscure an important factor, however. Some programs may appear frequently because they have very large audiences, though only a small proportion of these will read after listening. Other programs with few listeners may induce most of these to do some related browsing. In order to isolate the "reading pull" some measure of the size of audiences was required. This was gained from the frequency with which each program was mentioned as a favorite in a separate question. If then, a program is more frequently a favorite one then it is conducive to reading, its reading pull is low. If it appears relatively more often as "influential" than as "favorite," its reading pull is high. The following table gives the distribution for the main types according to these two bases:

TABLE 1. FREQUENCY OF MENTIONS OF VARIOUS PROGRAMS AS STIMULI FOR FOLLOW-UP READING

Type of program followed up	*Number*		*Percent*
Serious talks programs	228		28.5
Alexander Woollcott		35	
Book talks		83	
Forums and discussions		35	
Politics and government		25	
Religious talks		18	
News	112		13.9
Bulletins		44	
Commentators		51	
March of Time		17	
Dramatizations	150		18.7
Orson Welles		69	
Classical and Semi-classical music	87		10.8
Opera		32	
Symphonic—comment general		22	
Symphonic—comment Deems Taylor		17	
Quiz contest	65		8.1
Information Please!		52	
Comedy and Variety	47		5.9
Popular knowledge talks	32		4.0
Popular stories and serials	22		2.7
Service programs	13		1.8
Popular, dance, and band music	4		0.5
Miscellaneous	41		5.1
Total	801		100.0

TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF PROGRAM TYPES MENTIONED AS FAVORITE AND MENTIONED AS PROGRAMS MAKING RESPONDENTS READ

Program Type	*Percent of all Favorite Programs*	*Percent of all Influential Programs*
Classical and semi-classical music	14.8	10.8
Popular music	9.2	0.5
Popular stories and serials	10.3	2.7
Serious drama	8.7	18.7
Comedy and variety	19.2	5.9
News reports*	9.7	7.6
News commentators	5.1	6.3
Quiz	12.6	8.1
Serious talks	4.7	28.5
Popular talks	0.8	4.0
Service programs	.09	1.8
Others	3.5	5.1
Total	100.0	100.0

This last table shows, then, the relative effectiveness of the various types of programs in stimulating reading. For example, though comedy and variety rank high as popular programs, they are completely negligible as stimulants to reading. Serious talks, while not so popular, are very effective. The great reading pull of serious drama is something which was suspected, and seems definitely established by these figures. The relatively strong reading pull of music programs is somewhat surprising, especially in view of the fact that it is about the same as that of quizzes, which is smaller than one might have expected. Probably direct suggestions of commentators are the explanation, as Table 1 indicates.

Why do people follow up radio listening by reading? This question cannot be answered from a straight informational survey, but a glance at the types of reading done throws some light on the motives at work. About one-fourth of the reading (200 cases), was of fiction heard over the air, mostly in dramatic form. Of the remaining three-quarters, 136 cases heard some specific suggestion of a pamphlet or book on a program, 105 were interested in a speaker and wanted to read what he had written, while 340 read for further information upon their own initiative, once the subject of the broadcast had aroused their interest. For the great majority of the latter type, the broadcast does not "create" interest in

*Here newspaper reading is included as follow-up.

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the subject, but rather crystallizes it around certain printed material:

> I read "With Lawrence in Arabia" after hearing the newscast of his death. I am a British subject, and very familiar with the Colonial system and have travelled a great deal in that section of the world, so wanted to read the book.
>
> I subscribed to and read *Newsweek* after listening to the Town Meeting of the Air, because there are many more points brought out which the daily papers do not cover. I have a conviction that one should know more of what is happening so that opinions do not take the place of knowledge.

Those who spoke of interest in authors indicate that these must be skillful at the microphone to be effective:

> I read Cornelia Otis Skinner's "Dithers and Jitters" as a consequence of hearing her on *Information Please!* because the cleverness exhibited by Miss Skinner in answering questions made me want to enjoy it further.

In a small miscellaneous group, there was a tendency to check up on people appearing on the air:

> I consulted the dictionary in order to check up on the pronunciation of the speakers. I have been conscious of English usage for a number of years, and wanted to verify their pronunciation of words as it differed from mine.

To the question, "Was there any other influence prior to or in addition to the radio program which prompted this reading?" about half of the influenced group gave affirmatives. In the order of their frequency, these conjoint influences were printed references, personal recommendations, and previous experiences with the book or author. It is of psychological significance that so many would mention offhand multiple influences. The hypothesis could be advanced that the successful direction of an individual's choice of reading will, in most cases, hinge upon a certain suggestion coming as the "last straw" in a series of stimuli. The following comments exemplify this point:

> I read "Romance of the World" after hearing of it over the Catholic Hour. A friend who was listening with me said she had read it, and strongly recommended it, so I read it.
>
> I read Anne Lindbergh's "Listen, the Wind!" after hearing of it on a woman's program, and also because I had read her "North to the Orient" and thought it very fine.

The treatment of these data makes it possible to single out special types of people which are especially likely to take radio as a guide in their reading. Amount of formal education is very indicative, with one out of every three persons above the grade school level giving at least one situation in which he was influenced, as shown in the following table.

Caricature by William Auerbach-Levy

The radio has enabled Alexander Woollcott to go "quietly mad" over a book.

TABLE 3. PROPORTION OF PEOPLE ON THREE LEVELS OF EDUCATION REPORTING READING IN CONSEQUENCE OF LISTENING TO A RADIO PROGRAM

Education	*Proportion of Follow-up Readers*	*Total Number of Cases*
Elementary School	15.8	272
High School	31.0	718
College	36.7	928

In general, the susceptibility to do follow-up reading is greater the more a group usually listens to the radio. From analysis of the question, "How many hours do you usually listen to the radio on an average winter evening?" this can be shown:

TABLE 4. FOLLOW-UP READING RELATED TO AMOUNT OF RADIO LISTENING

Amount of Listening	*Proportion of Follow-up Readers*	*Total Number of Cases**
Less than one hour	18.8	393
One to three hours	33.5	1041
Three hours or more	39.8	443

There is naturally a high correlation between amount of reading in general and amount of follow-up reading. One interesting fact can be drawn from a more elaborate breakdown of the figures. There is much greater difference in the proportion of non-college people who follow up, according to the amount of their reading, than of college people. The highest proportion of all is that of non-college people who read much. Apparently this is the serious-minded type of person who has fewer resources in his own background and looks for reading advice wherever it may be found.

*The total number of cases included varies slightly from table to table according to the number or insufficient answers turned in on different questions.

TABLE 5. PROPORTION REPORTING FOLLOW-UP, BY EDUCATION AND AMOUNT OF READING

	Non-College	*College*
Read little	22.4	34.7
Read much	45.5	41.8

In similar fashion it can be shown that women do more follow-up reading than men, and young people more than older ones, using forty as a dividing line. Such information can be used by the program producer.

It should be stressed again that, even after seeing people read in consequence of listening to the radio, it cannot be shown whether the total effect of radio is toward an increase of reading. It could well be that people take reading clues from the radio, but still read less than they otherwise might because they spend so much time listening. If such a trend is operative, it is of practical and cultural importance that radio itself can be used to offset it. One of the important implications in this study is the outstanding "reading pull" of programs devoted to books or giving direct suggestions to read. That the audiences for such programs is not very great should not be discouraging, because they share this handicap with most other serious programs. They do not make a bad showing, if one keeps in mind that there is certainly no book program which has been aided by anything like the build-up and the tradition which some of the public affairs programs enjoy. It may well be that a sector of the population which would be interested in serious matters of a more esthetic and less political nature have been neglected.

Alberta Curtis, of the Princeton University Office of Radio Research, prepared this article from material in Paul F. Lazarsfeld's forthcoming "Radio and the Printed Page."

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. *Graustark,* by George Barr McCutcheon.
2. Shangri-La, in *Lost Horizon,* by James Hilton.
3. Anchuria, in *Cabbages and Kings,* by O. Henry.
4. Ruritania, in *The Prisoner of Zenda,* by Anthony Hope.
5. Lilliput, in *Gulliver's Travels,* by Swift.
6. El Dorado, in *Candide,* by Voltaire.
7. Valhalla, in Norse Mythology.
8. Xanadu, in *Kubla Khan,* by Coleridge.
9. Inscription over the gateway to hell in Dante's *Inferno.*
10. *The Curious Republic of Gondour,* by Mark Twain.

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Yeats: Master of Diction

LAST POEMS. By W. B. Yeats. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1940. 126 *pp.* $1.75.

Reviewed by W. H. AUDEN

"EVERYTHING he wrote was read," Yeats said in one of his last poems, and, indeed, he was unusually fortunate, for few poets have so managed to complete their career without suffering any reverses of reputation, at least with the young, and still fewer have written their most widely-acclaimed work in the second half of their life. The universal admiration which his later poems have commanded is all the more surprising when one remembers how antagonistic were both his general opinions and his conception of his art to those current in recent literary movements.

> Sing the peasantry, and then
> Hard-riding country gentlemen,
> The holiness of monks, and after
> Porter-drinkers' randy laughter;
> Sing the lords and ladies gay
> That were beaten into the clay
> Through seven heroic centuries;
> Cast your mind on other days. . . .

This shows scant sympathy with the Social Consciousness of the Thirties, and

> Processions that lack high stilts
> have nothing that catches the eye. . . .
> Because piebald ponies, led bears, caged lions, make but poor shows,
> Because children demand Daddy-long-legs upon his timber toes,
> Because women in the upper storeys demand a face at the pane.

is far removed from those who, reacting during the Twenties against inflated Victorian rhetoric, made understatement their God, and sacrificed grammar to terseness. I find it encouraging that, despite this, Yeats was recognized as a great poet, for it indicates that readers are less bigoted, less insistent upon the identity of the poet's beliefs with their own, and, when they can find some that is not completely trivial in subject, more appreciative of poetry that sounds well, that *sings,* than they sometimes appear.

The first thing that strikes one about Yeats is that he really enjoyed writing poetry. Some moderns make one feel that they regard it merely as a necessary means to some other end, the communication of ideas, mystical experience, self-analysis, castigation of abuses or what-have-you, and that the

W. B. Yeats really enjoyed writing poetry.

medium in which they work, the sounds and patterns of words, irrespective of the subject, give them little or no pleasure. Yeats, on the other hand, was always more concerned with whether or not a phrase sounded effective, than with the truth of its idea or the honesty of its emotion.

Both attitudes, the Puritanical and the Esthetic, have their dangers. The first, in forgetting that poetry is an *art,* i.e., artificial, a *factibile* not an *agibile,* may defeat its own purpose by producing drab stuff which is so harsh to the ear and lacking in pattern, that no one can take any pleasure in *reading it; the second, by ignoring the* fact that the artist is a human being with a moral responsibility to be honest, humble, and self-critical, may leave the poet too easily content with ideas which he finds poetically useful and effective. Not bothering to reexamine them, to throw out the false elements and develop the rest further, he is prevented from reaching his full potential poetic stature, and remains playing variations on the old tune which has served him so well in the past.

It cannot be said that Yeats completely escaped this second temptation. There are, particularly in this volume, more frequent echoes from his own previous work, both in phrasing and rhythm, than there ought to be, and, though every short poem, no doubt, expresses an attitude which in so far as it is one out of many possible moods may be called a pose, its singularity should not obtrude, and on occasion Yeats indulges in an embarrassing insistence upon an old man's virility, which some one who was more self-critical, not as a poet, but as a man, would have avoided.

Further, his utter lack of effort to relate his esthetic Weltanschauung with that of science, a hostile neglect which was due, in part at least, to the age in which he was born when science was avidly mechanistic, was perhaps the reason why he never succeeded in writing a long poem. For, as he himself says so beautifully in "The Circus Animals' Desertion."

> Character isolated by a deed
> To engross the present and dominate memory.
> Players and painted stage took all my love,
> And not those things that they were emblems of.
>
> Those masterful images because complete
> Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?
> A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
> Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,
> Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut
> Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone,
> I must lie down where all the ladders start,
> In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart.

But it was just this that he never did.

Much of his best work, such as the poem just quoted or "Ego Dominus Tuus," is concerned with the relation of Life and Art. In this relation he had, like Thomas Mann and Valéry, a profound sense of what Kierkegaard called the Dialectic, but his vision of other kinds of relations was two-dimensional. Hence his onesided determinist and "musical" view of history, and the lack of drama which not all his theater can conceal. I cannot but feel, for instance, that the two plays in this volume are worthless.

Yet how little we care. For it is the lyrics we read. In lyric writing what matters more than anything else, more than subject-matter or wisdom, is diction, and of diction, "simple, sensuous and passionate," Yeats is a consummate master.

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Poetry

The Revolt Against Marx

PLANETS & ANGELS. By Eugene Jolas. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell Chapbooks. 1940. $1.75.

THE WHITE STRANGER. By Kimball Flaccus. New York: Scribner's Sons. 1940. 115 *pp.* $2.50.

THE MAN COMING TOWARD YOU. By Oscar Williams. New York: Oxford University Press. 1940. 109 *pp.* $2.

FIRST MANIFESTO. By Thomas McGrath. Baton Rouge, La.: Swallow Pamphlets: No. 1.

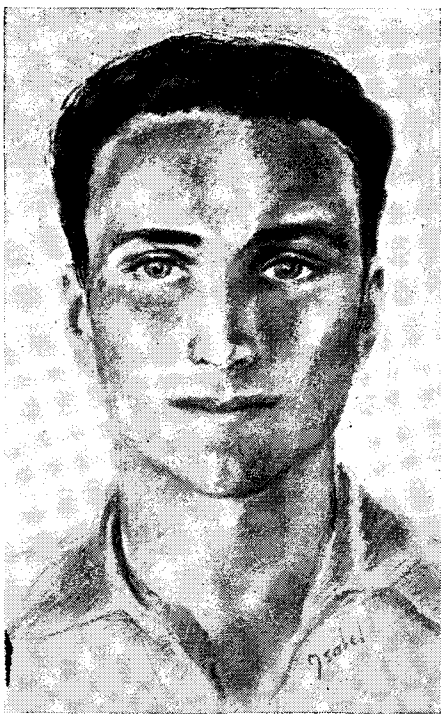
Reviewed by SELDEN RODMAN

THOUGH two of these four interesting experimenters in poetry have been writing for some years, all of them in a way are participants in the current revolt against the ten-years-dominant Marxist Muse. They didn't start the revolt, of course; Auden himself, perhaps the strongest of the Marxists, jumped off the train long before the Nazi-Soviet pact made train-jumping a popular indoor sport. Nor can any of these particular four be called "ex"-anything. McGrath, a radical Midwesterner, modernizes his native idiom with echoes of Auden and Patchen. Williams, a romantic of the early 20s who took time out to prepare advertising copy for the Boom, is still a romantic—of the Depression. Flaccus is a young college graduate whose effort to develop a classical style and find the inspiration of a classical native mythology has won the praise of T. S. Eliot. And Eugene Jolas, remembered for his editorship of *transition* and championship of Joyce's linguistic blitzkrieg, now announces that in "verticalism," language "must become a duologue between the I and the collective you, between the I and the Higher Reality."

Whatever the "Higher Reality" may be, Mr. Jolas has still to find his medium in poetry. That poetic vice of the Twenties—rebelling so strenuously against the content or body of poetry that nothing remains but its functionless arms and legs—is elevated by Mr. Jolas into a religion.

> "You praise the self-restraint with which they write—
> I'm with you there, of course;
> They use the snaffle and the curb all right
> But where's the bloody horse?"

Mr. Jolas uses and invents words with something of the Joycean largesse,



Portrait by Isabel Lattimore

Kimball Flaccus' gift is lyrical rather than dramatic.

but the effect is more academic than poetic.

Mr. Flaccus will be called academic, too, by some critics, for his quiet adaptation of traditional meters to such a theme as his mythic play of birth and death, peace and war, "The White Stranger." However Mr. Flaccus has established a competent technical and ideological basis from which to advance to more ambitious themes. His weaknesses, both of which he may be expected to overcome, are a certain heaviness of pace and a tendency to overlook clichés ("progress among nations," "reefs as black as ink," etc.). Mr. Flaccus's gift is lyrical rather than dramatic.

Mr. Williams's style is marked by none of the reticence which characterizes that of Mr. Flaccus. Exaggeration and violence carried to the point of vulgarity and bathos mar a virtuosity that for its individual thrusts of satire and symbolism is often inspired. Unfortunately Mr. Williams's cleverness ("The train zoomed, a zipper closing up swiftly the seam of time," "A milkman shakes the low bells of milk-bottles in the iron baskets of our civilization," etc.) gets the better of him. The central picture of the lonely, confused "little man" lost in a nightmare-jungle of twentieth-century machinery emerges. But one's attention is continually distracted. Abstractions, like parts on a conveyor belt, flash past the dazzled eye, but the engine as a whole is never introduced. Mr. Williams has scores of fine images, every page is studded with them; but some restless insecurity pushes him on to the final abstraction that sinks the boat, the tell-tale climax, ludicrous rather than terrible:

> I hear an early morning whistle hang a blue icicle
> Upon the lintel of my personal class struggle . . .

One cannot feel that Mr. Williams has exerted enough of the poet's necessary effort to understand his world. And the result is that instead of sympathizing with or being alarmed at the synthetic Walpurgisnacht, the reader too often sympathizes with or is alarmed for Mr. Williams.

Mr. McGrath's point of take-off is the same as Mr. Williams's and Mr. Jolas's, but (perhaps because his field is further inland and flatter) his landings are smoother. At his worst, he is closer to banality. But at his best, because he takes naturally to the folk ballad and to current figures of speech, he achieves a forthright punch that hits between the eyes. He can twit his more sophisticated contemporaries:

> when the bridges are bombed and the rivers too high
> and a nameless fear has wings in the sky
> and the personal wireless is blocked by static
> arrange your bones in a surrealist attic.

He can be casual, and even witty at the expense of injustice, without parking his conscience. And he can be indignant about poverty without assuming either the supposed uncouthness of the oppressed or the elaborate humility of certain reformers. Incidentally, American publishers, if there are any left who regard poets as more than "potential" novelists, could have an open season with the number of first rate talents still outside of boards. McGrath, William Stephens, Elizabeth Bishop, to name only three, would seem risks worth taking; Archibald Fleming wouldn't even be a risk.

Selden Rodman is the editor of the monthly magazine, Common Sense.

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Lady Sherlock's Story

AUNT BEARDIE. By Joseph Shearing. New York: Harrison-Hilton Books. 1940. 316 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

IN the trial scene in the last act of that really first-rate murder story, the "Oresteia" of Aeschylus, the Chief Fury (who fulfills the function of the D.A.) asks Orestes how it was that he killed his mother. He replies, with the flippancy of desperation: "How? With my naked sword! I cut her throat." At this the Fury repeats her question in a different form: "How did you come to do it? By what prompting?" These two versions of the question stand for the two broad approaches to the murder story. The question as to means is that of the standard detective story; but there is a devoted band of murder-addicts who insist that better stories come from asking what was the prompting; they maintain that the explanation of how the murderer got into the locked room is never so exciting as that of how murder got into Macbeth's heart, and that even the charge of the Hound of the Baskervilles is less thrilling than the slow, dimly foreseen approach of murder herself stalking her victim. All these sectaries have long relied on Mr. Joseph Shearing for his somber reconstructions of actual crimes of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, retold, with changed names, in the form of novels, which show the smoldering of a character or a situation which plainly must in time flame into killing.

His present book is one of his best. For, with the example of that other great murder yarn, "Bleak House," we need not mind confessing that a dash of mystery is an advantage. Death may be seen to be clearly approaching—but whom? And can the situation be solved without tragedy? That is what we have in "Aunt Beardie," which first shows a group of French refugees from the Terror, among them two little girls, taken in by the protection of a certain M. Bernard, who is obviously an adventurer; and then skips a period of years to show one of the little girls grown into Lady Sherlock, the petted wife of a Hampshire baronet and the mother of a nearly grown daughter, Jenny. But Lady Sherlock is not so happy as she should be, even before the arrival of a gaunt, hard-featured woman who announces herself as the other little girl of her refugee days. She is not prepossessing, but Lady Sherlock welcomes her effusively and she becomes a member of the family; and because, as she says, she has a rough, bristly chin, she nicknames herself the children's Aunt Beardie. It is plain at once to the reader that Aunt Beardie, with her hands enlarged by rheumatism, her voice hoarse from a prison cough, her rough chin, and her charming, taking ways, is a figure out of Lady Sherlock's past, who has some hold over her; and it is not hard to guess who the figure is. But what is harder to foresee is the outcome, through the feverish chapters when Jenny, who has learned that her mother is being blackmailed, naturally confides all her plans in her dear Aunt Beardie; when Jenny and Aunt Beardie travel to Versailles together, and Jenny's maid falls sick and has to be left behind.

With a movement slow enough for apprehension and rapid enough for suspense, the action mounts to its climax, a thoroughly satisfactory one. That is unfortunately more than can be said for the conclusion, a sort of postscript which seems unnecessary and unmotivated. One can only say "seems," for it may have been part of the original factual story—or it may not; one wishes, not for the first time, that Mr. Shearing would tell us what are the actual cases on which he bases his stories, so that one could tell better what was due to his management. But certainly some one, either an actual slayer or Mr. Shearing, has at the end indulged in some badly sentimental squeamishness over what may be described as our old friend Doctor Livesay said of a similar incident, "A meritorious action, sir, like stamping on a cockroach."

From the jacket design.

Short Story Winners

Winners of the National College Short Story Contest conducted by *Story Magazine* are Mary Medearis, of Columbia University, who won first prize of $100 for "Death of a Country Doctor;" Robert Markewich, of Harvard University, who won second prize for "Return to the Bronx," and Jerome Abe Selman, of Cooper Union, New York City, for "Symphony in a Butcher Store."

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Prize Parson

FORTY YEARS A COUNTRY PREACHER. By George B. Gilbert. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1940. 319 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by EDWARD DANIELS

WE'VE had books on country doctors, country lawyers, and now this warmly human chronicle of a country parson, no less a-typical than the others. Chosen in a nation-wide contest in *The Christian Herald,* written up in *Time,* and pictured in *Life* cutting his parishoners' hair (he has given more than 5,000 haircuts, which art he learned by practising on the dog!) George B. Gilbert is a man who would "rather be accused of impiety than of dullness" and who may not rightly be accused of either.

Beginning with his early life in Vermont, Mr. Gilbert unfolds for us a story that is packed full to the brim of "the stuff of life." Readers will be delighted with his picture (I almost said "caricature") of his father, "A small man with a majestic beard and excitable manner" who was "full of ginger and opposition to the end" as befitted a man who was almost the only Democrat in Vermont. He may very well take his place along with Clarence Day's father.

Throughout the book we find a whole-souled preacher intent on following the precept of one who "went about doing good" and between the lines George Gilbert reveals himself as one touched with the miracle of selflessness. An altogether unconventional Episcopalian whose life was once saved because a boy hid an angry father's gun, who was ejected from the rectory, he has lived by the assumption that the church was made for man, and not man for the church. Sus-

Hartford Times

Parson Gilbert has administered more than 5,000 haircuts.

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tained by a rare sense of humor, great resourcefulness, and a deep understanding of the varieties of human experience and frailty, his ministry has always been a battle for the underprivileged in the "country slums."

A great believer in story-telling, he tells many a rare story himself of cook stoves, expectant mothers, church suppers, the State Legislature (in which he served as Representative and later as Chaplain) of rather discouraging battles with "churchianity." Moving with the times from bicycle to horse and buggy to automobile (a ten-year old model, complete with trailer) his book is a vivid commentary on life in the hills behind Connecticut's suburbiana.

If the country church is "dying," it may be because there are too few indefatigable George Gilberts. In one place there is the prescription for a country preacher: "a big heart and a leather stomach." This Country Preacher has a fine head as well, and the unconventional stuff of which saints—who are always unconventional—are made.

"FOR a picture of Japan today—the blind and pathetic loyalty of its people to the state, the noble sacrifices for a cause we can but deprecate, the attitude of mind which makes such sacrifices not only possible but jubilant, *Grandmother O Kyo* is alone in its field. Its importance as a sign of the times cannot be denied."—*New York Times* Book Review

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RICHARD R. SMITH, Publisher, 120 E. 39ST., NEW YORK

WRITERS OF THE EIGHTIES

(*Continued from page* 3)

rest. The great social causes and the spiritual causes that had stirred the romantic poets of the earlier time, the faiths and the adorations all were gone; and poetry was left high and dry in a world that had ceased to nourish poets, who remained as idle singers of empty days.

THE best of these idle singers was Thomas Bailey Aldrich—for poetry of a kind abounded still. This alert little man, blond, erect, ruddy, and jaunty, had arrived in Boston as recently as Howells. Born in Portsmouth, he described himself as Boston-plated because he had lived in New York in his formative years, in the well-known Bohemian circle; and he wore a waxed moustache, a symbol of his mundane tastes, in the style of Napoleon III, the Paris-plated. A journalist, an assistant of Willis, he had gone to the front in Virginia, like Winslow Homer. He had reported the war, as Homer sketched it; and he had returned to New England in 1866 as an editor under the same roof with Howells. His magazine, *Every Saturday,* reprinted selections from foreign papers, reflecting the new cosmopolitan interests of Boston. It was "eclectic," to use a word that was much in vogue, and Aldrich's own mind was eclectic also—it borrowed freely from every source that appealed to a roving fancy. A wit as well as a poet, Aldrich had had an early success, in this, and in other ways, resembling Lowell; for, along with his exotic themes, he shared the pure New England feeling that Lowell expressed in his poems about birds and springtime. He was a lesser Lowell, more deft than his master. He was already a "household poet" in 1866; and Howells, in his Western remoteness, had thought of Aldrich as one of the reigning stars of the Boston circle. Aldrich had a cottage in the village of Ponkapog, overlooking the Neponset marshes, south of Boston.

By 1881, when he took the place of Howells, who had resigned from *The Atlantic,* Aldrich's best-known work had already appeared. He was popularly respected as a poet and a storyteller whose writing was always accomplished and sometimes brilliant. In his cool and polished prose and verse, he revealed himself as a notable craftsman; and he said he would "rather be censured in pure English than praised in bad"—which was not true, of course, but let that pass. His writing was undoubtedly distinguished. It was lucid, skillful, crisp, and fresh; and the neat-handed Aldrich, who was very seldom commonplace, always knew when to stop, an unusual virtue. The fluent elder poets had not possessed it; and Aldrich's flute-like note was exceedingly pleasant in a world that was used to poets who went on and on. Moreover, he was adroit as well as brief. Dr. Holmes had warned him against verbal epicureanism and his liking for vanilla-flavored words, the end of which was "rhythmical gout," as the hardy doctor knew, and "incurable poetical disorder."

Aldrich scarcely needed this admonition. He was more consciously an artist than Holmes or Lowell, though he lacked their moral force and their wealth of perception, and he soon outgrew his early faults of style. Even his travel-writing, "From Ponkapog to Pesth," was clear and witty: where most of his travelling friends—for instance, Warner—when it came to their "days in Tangier," could never find words enough to convey their impressions, Aldrich's care was not to say too much. These literary virtues marked his stories, "Marjorie Daw," "A Midnight Fantasy," the little tales of "Two Bites at a Cherry," and his three short novels or romances. Fanciful or whimsical, realistic now and then, these tales ranged widely in their themes and persons: they dealt with Western gold-seekers, returned soldiers and human oddities, yachtsmen, strikers, misers, and insane young women who recover their wits at appropriate moments. Sometimes they were Hawthornesque, sometimes they were arch or coy, sometimes they were impossibly melodramatic; but their touch was almost invariably expert and clever. "Marjorie Daw," the cleverest, was the novelist's dream of the perfect reader, in a day when the novelist's readers were mostly young ladies. For Marjorie was incredibly lovely; and what was she doing under the trees, lying in her hammock, swaying like a pond-lily? Reading—and what but a novel?—and a novel by whom? Would not Howells and Henry James have liked to know? While "Marjorie Daw," of all these tales, was the most original invention, "The Story of a Bad Boy," the more sincere and natural, was destined, on all accounts, for the longest life. This picture of Aldrich's childhood at Portsmouth was the first of the series of books about boys that his friends of Mark Twain's circle were soon to write. For Aldrich was intimate with

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Clemens, as with Howells and Warner, and even had something in common with this friend from the West. As a child who lived in New Orleans, before he returned to Portsmouth, he remembered the steamboat-life on the Mississippi. "The Story of a Bad Boy" started the train of associations that led to the similar books of all these authors, Warner's "Being a Boy," Howells's "A Boy's Town," and Clemens's "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn." In this somewhat inglorious post-war epoch, boyhood seemed better than manhood. At least, the leading authors wrote about it with a relish they seldom brought to the rest of life. Aldrich's book was happier than Warner's as an evocation of childhood in the older New England.

FOR the rest, there was more New York than Boston in the temper of Aldrich's prose and verse, for all it owed to Longfellow, Hawthorne, and Lowell. Aldrich's "surprise endings" reflected the love of effects that was always said to characterize New Yorkers, and his taste for the Second Empire savored of Broadway. He was a tireless reader of the light French novels that everyone discussed on the banks of the Hudson, and the studio-talk of the New York painters had left long traces in his mind. Many of these painters imitated Isabey, Gérôme, Fortuny, and their scenes of Algeria, Arabia, Spain, and Tunis, with odalisques and dancing-girls, snake-charmers and Moorish models, brocaded hangings, minarets, and mosques. These pictures reappeared in the verses of Aldrich, which also reproduced their skillful brush-work. He shared the taste for bric-a-brac, for the picturesque at any price that characterized this age of collecting and travel, for knick-knacks and whatnots, Persian carpets, Spanish leather, Turkish brass, vases and German silver, sandalwood, cloisonné, lacquer. His poems were as full of these trappings as the studios and parlors of the eighties. He carried in his head and transferred to paper what others brought home from Europe in their trunks and boxes. As for his songs and epigrams, they were fresh and charming. He excelled in the light verse that English writers were also producing in this evening of the greater English poets.

Round Aldrich, as an editor, clustered most of the other poets who spoke for this twilit world of the later New England. One of his *protégés* was George Edward Woodberry, whom Higginson had introduced to Lowell. Woodberry, the Beverly boy, had catalogued Lowell's library, when he was a student at Harvard. He was one of Henry Adams's pupils, and had also studied with Norton; and his first book, "A History of Wood Engraving," was one of the many products of Norton's teaching. Half its illustrations were from Norton's collection. The remarkable efflorescence of American wood-engraving had suggested this excellent book; but Woodberry was already a poet, and Norton and Lowell considered him the most promising of the rising generation. He had reviewed for *The Atlantic* under Howells, but Aldrich gave him an opening as a regular writer; and Edward Rowland Sill, the Connecticut poet, was another of Aldrich's favorites. Both these men were living at a distance. Woodberry was teaching in Nebraska, and Sill was in California, a professor of English. A more immediate member of Aldrich's circle was John Boyle O'Reilly, who edited the Boston Catholic weekly, *The Pilot*. This romantic Irishman, a schoolmaster's son, who had been a trooper in the British army, brought back life and fire to the languid eighties. Most of his work recalled the older Irish political poets, with their fluent versification and flowery diction. But he wrote a few songs and lyrics—"A White Rose" and "The Useless Ones"—that were lovely and lasting reminders of his delicate feeling.

Edward Rowland Sill shared with Aldrich, although the two had nothing else in common, the leading place among these lesser poets. A slight, shy, diffident man, a graduate of Yale, Sill had gone to California in 1861, where he spent five years in various occupations. Returning to Connecticut, his birthplace, intending to study theology, he went to the Harvard Divinity School for a year. But, finding that he was too sceptical to continue his studies, he soon went West again, with memories of Agassiz's lectures on science and the Boston music-hall that later found expression in his verses. He taught for a while in Ohio, but the greater part of his later life—he died in 1887, not yet fifty—was passed in California, at Berkeley, where he left a deep impression as professor of English. Aldrich heard of this "teacher who occasionally wrote verses," as the unassuming Sill described himself, and gave him a free hand in *The Atlantic*, where Sill, who shrank from publicity and preferred to appear anonymously, often signed his poems with a pen-name. In person, he resembled Amiel, and he shared Amiel's mental habits. He was introspective, and the bent of his mind was generally ethical. He was obsessed with the conflict of religion and science, and most of his delicate verses were concerned with this conflict, with doubt and disbelief, a somewhat vague aspiration and a wistful, post-Emersonian nature-worship. At their worst, they were marred by an adolescent mawkishness, and Sill was a poet of low vitality always; but his finest poem, "The Venus of Milo" with its evocation of Greek serenity, and some of his fables and field-notes were graceful and moving.

Meanwhile, side by side with Aldrich, Louise Chandler Moulton presided over the poets who remained in Boston. This somewhat gushing lady, as Whitman called her, had appeared in the days of the gift-books as "Ellen Louise." A Connecticut girl, she had gone to school, in the village of Pomfret, with Whistler, who had given her some of his drawings. She was a cousin of Stedman and had married a Boston editor, and she wrote Boston letters for the New York papers; then, forming a regular habit of going abroad in the summer, she introduced to American readers many of the newer poets of France and England.

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THE NEW BOOKS

Fiction

KIND ARE HER ANSWERS. By Mary Renault. Morrow. 1940. 314 *pp.* $2.50.

The smooth technique we have learned to expect from English writers is again admirably demonstrated in this novel. The story itself may be as familiar as God Save The King, yet the skill of British authors in their handling of characters, situations, atmosphere, more often than not holds the readers' attention to the last page. Miss Renault's plot is the old one of the triangle whose three sides are the unappreciated husband, the self-righteous wife, and the understanding girl. It holds no surprises, little suspense, and tells us little that we haven't been told many times before. Yet it is a well-written love story whose people most readers will find convincing and well worth reading about.

Kit Anderson is a rising young physician in a small town who finds himself suddenly freed from the thralldom of his love for his beautiful and thoroughly selfish wife, Janet. He reconciles himself to inevitable loneliness and is prepared to devote himself heart and soul to his practice. But Christie Heath, a gay, emotional young red-head who plays minor parts in a Little Theatre, comes to take care of her dying aunt, Kit's patient, and all his resolutions are immediately dissolved. Christie is everything Janet is not—eager for life, tender, and so generous that she cannot refuse anything to the men who need her warmth for their peace of body and mind. At the second meeting both recognize the inevitability of their love. There follow many stolen meetings fraught with danger. Kit's career barely escapes destruction when a malicious servant discovers their secret. The psychological conflicts arising from their illicit affair, Kit's efforts to maintain a "civilized" attitude toward Christie's other loves, the effect upon Janet of her husband's withdrawal, are treated understandingly, and the author's own intelligence prevents her story from becoming banal. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that stripped of its veneer this is the stereotyped story of the struggling male caught between the pincers of the cold, good wife, and the warm, naughty girl. Or is it that the war has reduced love triangles to a new low in point of significance?

M. S. U.

International

UNSER KAMPF. Our Struggle. By Sir Richard Acland. New York: Penguin Books. 1940. 160 *pp.* 25 *cents.*

This litle "Penguin Special" is indicative of the change that has taken place in both the word *liberal* in the English language and the *Liberal* party in British politics. Sir Richard Acland, elected as a Liberal M. P. from Devon in 1935, combines Karl Marx, Clarence Streit, and the New Testament by advocating in impassioned style the common ownership of virtually all property, a full-fledged international government, and a spiritual change of heart. He believes that the day for half-measures is past, and that capitalism, imperialism, war, and unselfishness in general must all be eradicated before they destroy civilization. Only the "big ideas," championed intelligently and courageously, and a new morality can save us.

In bringing forward so many gigantic proposals at the same time, Sir Richard Acland tends to weaken his case and to invite skepticism. He argues, but not quite convincingly, that complete socialism can be achieved without any loss of political liberty. While acknowledging that capitalists will fight for their privileges, he does not indicate how socialism can be attained without civil war. His proposals for international development of colonial areas and a world police force contain all the logical arguments made in the past twenty years, but do not meet the obvious objections raised regarding similar schemes. Sir Richard demands a change of heart without prescribing any specific remedies for our moral recovery.

Inasmuch as the failure of the old order is evidenced in every newspaper headline, it would be unjust and unwise to belittle the effort which Sir Richard Acland, like so many of his fellow countrymen, is making to think out a better plan. Europe can survive only by turning to big ideas like these.

J. F. G.

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The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
MURDER AT THE SCHOOL HOUSE *A. B. Cunningham* (Dutton: $2.)	Young Kentucky village school-marm brutally slain. Sheriff Jesse Roden and hound "Big Boy" drive killer to snarling confession.	Writer who knows suspense value of understatement spins effective yarn of hatreds and thwarted passion in mountain community.	Worthwhile
STREAMLINED MURDER *Sue MacVeigh* (Houghton Mifflin: $2.)	Sodium arsenite slays two railroaders as spectacular new train makes maiden trip. Sleuth Andy MacVeigh discovers who and why.	Solution trifle too complicated, otherwise excellent combination of Diesel-powered thrills and go-mile-an-hour action.	Good enough
THE MAN IN THE MOONLIGHT *Helen McCloy* (Morrow: $2.)	Exiled Austrian scientist shot in "Yorkville" college lab. Two more mysterious deaths. Psychiatrist-sleuth Willing solves them all.	Super-spooky atmosphere satisfactorily seasoned with weird experiments; vivid characters, tortuous plot, and much good talk.	Top-drawer
WIVES TO BURN *Lawrence G. Blochman* (Harcourt, Brace: $2.)	Frisco private dick, English C.I.D.-man, and equivocal American soldier-of-fortune mixed up in double slaying in India.	Strong mixture of blackmail, romance, and anti-Raj intrigue; with author's "Midnight Sailing" added for good measure.	High-powered

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Books into Pictures

THOMAS BURTON

THOSE of you who remember the arduous Ritz Brothers in the late-lamented motion picture version of Alexandre Dumas's "Les Trois Mousquetaires" (oh shades of D'Artagnan!) know that no great work of literature is ever held sacred in Hollywood. Yet many a minor work, many a bad novel or unappetizing tale, has improved in its motion picture version.

"Rebecca," the novel by Daphne du Maurier, for all its great popularity, limped badly and never really came completely to life. There were situations and characters in it that were dim and unlifelike—almost unbelievable. There was much lush, torpid melodrama spaded on with a heavy hand. The menace and ghoulish dangers were theatrical claptrap—chilling and scary as a painted false face is menacing. But in the motion picture version all this is brushed aside by the understanding and literary style of a greater craftsman than Miss du Maurier.

Alfred Hitchcock has made of "Rebecca" one of those perfect things—one of those masterpieces that we remember, like his other perfect cinema entertainments "The Thirty-nine Steps" and "The Lady Vanishes." The novel is all there. It is still the story of the young girl who marries Rebecca's widower and comes to live in dank, dismal Manderley. In the novel she was never very real, never excited compassion, was almost a puppet registering fright and fear only because the author said so. In the picture, Hitchcock touches her with a spark of genius and she moves in terror—flits before you a live, living person whom you pity and with whom you share some obscure dread. You become extremely susceptible to her fears. And Lord! but this Hitchcock has a sense of humor. There is no one making motion pictures today who can touch him for sly wit, fancy touch, or good rib-loosening laughter. Will you ever forget the two English cricket players in "The Lady Vanishes" or the political meeting in "The Thirty-nine Steps?" "Rebecca" is full of many such touches but I won't spoil the pleasure awaiting you by writing of them here. There is a delicate, instinctively alert intelligence in every scene.

Joan Fontaine plays the second Mrs. Winters and Laurence Olivier is her husband. And Mr. Olivier makes us proud that we speak English—proud that at last in Hollywood there is an actor who can speak English in a voice that can catch every beauty of vowel, every emotion of horror, hate, fear, love, and beauty and send it through the sound track to reach us. The scene in the boat house where, in semi-darkness, he tells his wife of the true fate of Rebecca, is something no reader of English prose will ever forget. It is an experience of subtle modulations. Hitchcock has directed this scene (as he has every scene) with a sense of timing, pace, and art—with a delicate feel and understanding that is new to the usual horror story or the pastoral artices you have seen before.

Like the simple poems of A. E. Housman, this story gives you the feeling that you are face to face with a master, yet to analyze the why of it is hard. The simple direct statement tricks you into thinking it is done with ease—yet behind every statement is the great skill and cunning of its creator.

Alfred Hitchcock will make other pictures in Hollywood. I hope he uses something by an American author. May I suggest Dashiell Hammett's "Red Harvest?"

IN this space recently I wrote of the historical novel, saying that the great contemporary historical novels were yet to be written. Readers have sent me letters saying that if we lack the novels we do not lack the personalities for great historical pictures. And so in this space I have gathered a group of remarkable books—not novels—about men of destiny whose life stories are not only fine motion picture material but whose exploits and adventures rival anything a Homer, Cervantes, Flaubert, Mark Twain, or Dostoievsky, ever put down on paper.

Why no studio has ever made an authoritative film about the life of Daniel Boone I don't know. There has been a bad "horse opera" called "Daniel Boone," but it was not about Daniel Boone and contained no documented facts nor bore any resemblance to the real Daniel Boone. I have just finished reading "Daniel Boone, Master of the Wilderness," by John Bakeless. Here is the script Hollywood has been waiting for. Here is a prodigiously endowed life—trapper, Indian fighter, diplomat, surveyor, and the damnedest man with a long rifle. Here is the living heart from which the half-legendary frontier blossomed out into the America we know today. But never mind its spiritual quandaries, its pure plot. The Story of the Warrior's Path, The Wilderness Road, the defense of Boonesborough, the burning of Chillicothe Village, to say nothing of the romantic moments of the kidnaping of Boone's daughters by Indians and their rescue by his future sons-in-law, are all strong cinema possibilities.

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The Compleat Collector

JOHN T. WINTERICH

WHO today plays euchre? Neither, in 1870, did Ah Sin, but

he smiled, as he sat by the table,
With the smile that was childlike and bland.

Those who are familiar with the verses that made Bret Harte's reputation overnight will recall that Ah Sin's duplicity was speedily exposed:

In his sleeves, which were long,
He had twenty-four packs,—
Which was coming it strong,
Yet I state but the facts.

It occurred to Burton Stevenson, editor of "The Home Book of Verse" and "The Home Book of Quotations" (and librarian of the Public Library at Chillicothe, Ohio), that this was coming it a bit too strong. Twenty-four packs are a lot of cards. There are various forms of euchre—auction, penalty, railroad, blind, call-ace—and they are played with a minimum of twenty-four cards and a maximum of thirty-two. Twenty-four packs, therefore, might mean as few as 576 cards or as many as 768—a considerable and, one would suppose, a futile quantity for Ah Sin to carry in his sleeves, however long.

Now the jack is an important card in euchre. The jack of trumps, in fact, is the highest ranking card, with the jack of the same color next (right bower and left bower). The ace, king, and so on follow, as in bridge.

Mr. Stevenson wondered if Bret Harte hadn't written "jacks" instead of "packs." Twenty-four individual cards would be a far more manageable quantity, and inevitably they would be jacks—the shock-troops. He therefore wisely took the matter up with this department, conducted as it is by an unfrocked faro dealer. The department conductor, after an intensive search, found on the shelves of G. A. Baker & Co., of 3 West 46th Street, New York, a virtually complete Bret Harte collection which included an item he had not seen before: Facsimile of the Original Manuscript of The Heathen Chinee, As Written for the Overland Monthly, (portrait of Harte) by Francis Bret Harte, Together with the corrected Letter Press, as published in the issue of September, 1870. John H. Carmany & Co. (woodcut of bear) Publishers. 409 Washington Street, San Francisco. Lith. Britton & Rey, S. F. Thus the front-wrapper title-page of this octavo pamphlet. The whole is surrounded by a heavy double-rule border with ornate corners. Below the border is the copyright entry, dated 1871.

The result was a disappointment. Bret Harte unquestionably wrote "packs." Oddly enough, the letter j does not occur in the entire poem, outside of the capital in the title: "Plain Language from Truthful James." (The facsimile proves that Harte originally intended to call it "On the Sinfulness of Ah Sin as Reported by Truthful James," and for seventy years the English-speaking world has known it as "The Heathen Chinee.") In no printed version does "jacks" appear, and Harte, be it remembered, was a trained editor, an author with a proofroom eye. The only exception is a recent edition of "The Home Book of Verse" in which Mr. Stevenson changed "packs" to "jacks" on his own responsibility. He now writes that he intends to change it back.

This department hopes he doesn't. Harte *must* have meant "jacks." Even the best proofroom eye can have a blind spot—it is conceivable that he never noticed the misprint, if misprint it was. But the whole logic of the situation demands "jacks." So do the spirit and letter of the verses themselves. Nye's own sleeve, be it remembered, was "stuffed full of aces and bowers," exactly as it should have been if Nye was that sort of player. And the marvel of Ah Sin's play was climaxed by his putting down

a right bower
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Did Ah Sin have to fumble about among 768 or 576 concealed cards to effect this consummation? One doubts it.

Mr. Stevenson and this department and all lovers of clean sport will welcome any information on the topic.

(*Continued from page 2*)

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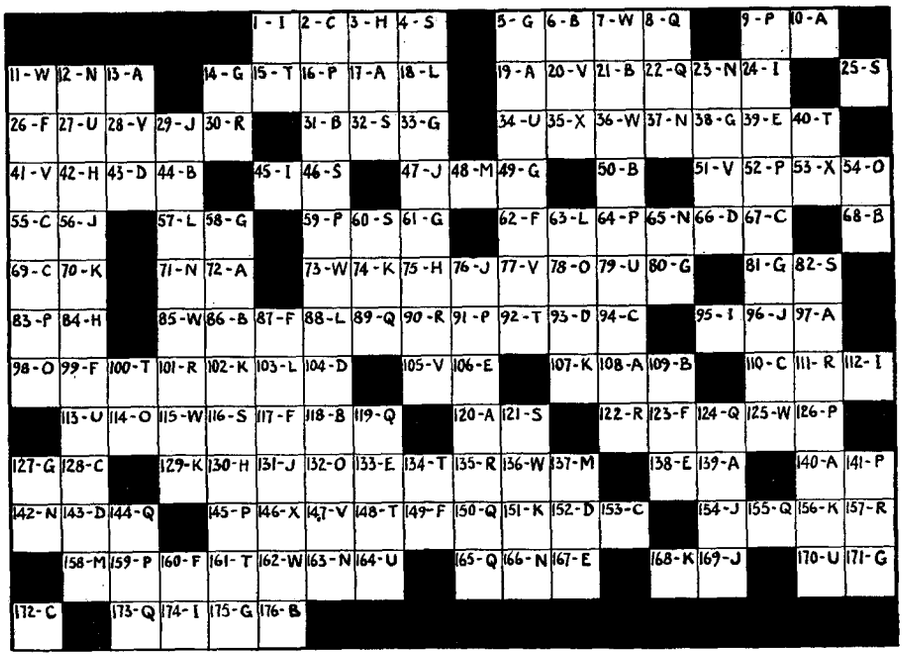
Double-Crostics: No. 324

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-four words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 20 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Finnish composer (1869-—).

B. Liable to be called to account.

C. Character in "David Copperfield."

D. Official "palace" of French Presidents.

E. Pause (Bib. origin).

F. Craving.

G. Mere nothing (interjection).

H. Last movement of a sonata.

I. Inclined to aloofness (colloq.)

J. Vexatious; indecorous.

K. Led to speak freely (2 wds.)

L. Element in character that determines what a man does (Aristotle).

M. First Chief Justice of the U. S.

N. Striking alteration.

O. Birthplace of Caesar Franck.

P. Unseasonable.

Q. Those not deserving of respect.

R. Sallies forth.

S. Mid-West Indian of the Shoshonean tribe.

T. Skill or competence in doing.

U. Mordecai's niece.

V. Confused mixing.

W. Fixed regard.

X. River.

WORDS

19	108	97	140	72	10	139	13	17	120
6	86	109	31	44	118	50	68	21	176
94	69	2	153	172	110	128	55	67	
143	66	104	93	43	152				
167	106	39	133	138					
26	62	160	149	87	99	123	117		
58	81	175	80	38	61	49	127	171	5	14	33
42	3	130	75	84					
112	95	1	174	24	45				
76	169	154	96	47	29	131	56		
151	102	156	107	74	168	129	70		
63	103	88	57	18					
158	48	137							
23	65	71	163	166	142	37	12		
98	114	132	78	54					
91	83	9	126	145	64	52	59	159	16	141
89	150	165	124	144	8	155	22	119	173
90	111	30	157	135	101	122			
25	121	4	32	82	116	60	46		
92	100	15	134	161	148	40			
27	113	34	170	79	164				
28	105	20	41	51	77	147			
11	162	136	85	115	36	73	125	7	
146	53	35							

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TRADE WINDS

P. E. G. QUERCUS

After Much Striving for Fame

It would be rather jolly, I think,
To be the original authority
On some obscure matter of literature or faith
Upon which, in one's leisure,
One had jotted down an inaccurate pamphlet;
And forever thereafter
To be quoted by all post-Vincentian borrowers
In a pertinacious footnote.

VINCENT STARRETT.

★ ★

PERHAPS it would have pleased G. K. Chesterton that in moments of grievance lately Old Q. fell back upon some of those strange little ethical fables which G. K. C. enjoyed pretending were detective stories. ☞ In the volume *The Secret of Father Brown* we found the following gnome: —"Beware of the man you forget; he is the one man who has you entirely at a disadvantage." ☞At the beaches of Flanders, salt water and fog came again to the aid of the English; what a fable G. K. C. would have made of that. ☞Fog was always the friend of the Anglo-Saxons; the English-thinking mind is itself vague, dim, cloudy, tenebrous, and obscure; and throws up marvelous prisms when the sun shines through it. Its goddess is Iris.

★ ★

☞We have to chuckle when we think of a friend who published in 1937 (in this very review) a queer serial called *The Trojan Horse,* dealing under disguise with precisely the things that are happening now. Everybody squawked that they couldn't figure out such old-fashioned stuff and what is a Trojan Horse? Now the phrase is used incessantly and our friend grinds his teeth with frustrated merriment. ☞Retz & Storm, 598 Madison Ave., N. Y. C., offer for $40 the autograph MS of Eugene Field's noble ballad *The Clink of the Ice in the Pitcher,* dated at Chicago in August, 1891. We always associate that poem with our old friend Harry Snyder when we were visiting him at Young's Hotel in Honolulu. ☞At the end of the corridor was a big chest filled with cracked ice and Harry used to proceed thither with a pitcher when an okolehao highball was in prospect. This of course was unconstitutional in those days, so we have never mentioned it before; but it did much to lubricate the book biz in the Islands.

★ ★

☞The only things Old Q. has ever thought seriously of collecting are these: eggcups, pictures, cross-sections of ships, and the imprints of Forgotten Publishers in Philadelphia. ☞The number of ancient publishers who once practised in Philly and then vanished is an odd footnote in the history of American print. We just came upon a precious item for our shelf, the name of William S. & Alfred Martien, who in 1861 at 606 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, published *Poems* by T. H. Stockton, then chaplain to Congress. ☞It is unlikely that we shall ever read the worthy parson's verses, but we note that the illustrations were engraved by Frank R. Stockton, and we have wondered if that was the author's son and also the admired and now forgotten author?

★ ★

☞Our annual allusion to Walt Whitman, due about this season, mentions not only that the Book of the Month Club is going to distribute a dividend edition of *Leaves of Grass;* but also reminds you that the Facsimile Text Society, 2960 Broadway, offers for the modest price of $2 an exact replica of the *Leaves* in their original 1855 form; an ideal gift for those who are really interested in Walt and not just fashionable about him. ☞But all the offerings of the Facsimile boys are interesting, inexpensive, and unusual presents for weddings, commencements, birthdays, binges, and all celebrations among people of taste. ☞Other pleasant surprises, the colored lithographs of famous old steamships listed at $15 by C. P. Everitt, 107 East 59, N. Y. C.

★ ★

☞Old Q. is crotchety and ill humored in the matter of bookplates; he enjoys occasional labels of that sort when genuinely personal and odd; most of them simply annoy him. ☞For himself, Old Q. believes that writing his name in a book, if he really cares for same, is sufficient. ☞But if you wish to see a fine craftsman putting his mind on the matter of bookplates write to J. J. Lankes, Hilton Village, Virginia. Mr. Lankes has uttered a pamphlet to people who are weary of the commonplace; but if you want it send him an addressed envelope.

★ ★

☞Speaking of surreptitious items, Pamphlet House, Room 1800, 1775 Broadway, N. Y. C., is issuing *Baker Street and Beyond,* a Sherlockian Gazeteer by Edgar W. Smith with admirable maps drawn by Dr. Julian Wolff. This astonishing topography lists and comments 517 streets, towns, places or regions (from Abbas Parva to Zion) that have "fallen under the benevolent shadow of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson." It may be had, in plain envelope, at $1.25 in paper and $2.50 in cloth. ☞We rather suspect also that Dave Randall at Scribner's, who knows his Baker Street, will have copies available for the passer-by.

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